

**(Washington, DC)** Today, Congressman Alcee L. Hastings (D-Miramar) made the following statement in recognition of the 38<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the landmark Supreme Court decision, *Roe v. Wade*, which legalized abortion and gave women an immutable voice on matters of their own health:

“Since 1972, women in America have been able to determine their own reproductive lives. The constitutional right to privacy has withstood numerous legal challenges and helped ensure that more women have access to lifesaving reproductive services. While the legacy of *Roe v. Wade* has endured, the commemoration of this important Supreme Court case and its implications for our society are no less important than in years past.

“Each year, the recognition of *Roe v. Wade*’s anniversary is met with indignation from anti-choice activists. This year, anti-choice demonstrators will march behind the theme: ‘Thou Shalt Protect the Equal Right to Life of Each Innocent Born and Preborn Human in Existence at Fertilization. No Exception! No Compromise!’ While I understand their point of view, I respectfully disagree. Because of *Roe v. Wade*, thousands of women’s lives have been spared through legal abortion care. It is unconscionable that any woman should have to suffer the indignity of an illegal ‘back alley’ abortion, which often results in infertility or death. It is utterly preposterous that a victim of rape or incest should be forced to bear their attacker’s child as some anti-choice activists would prefer. As history shows, outlawing abortion will not prevent the procedure from being performed in an illegal and unsafe manner.

“Appropriately, a woman’s right to privacy on matters of reproductive and personal health, the legal basis for abortion that is protected by *Roe v. Wade*, is firmly grounded in constitutional precedent. Integral to *Roe v. Wade*’s constitutional viability were the Supreme Court cases *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965) and *Eisenstadt v. Baird* (1972). Together, these cases recognized the right of an individual ‘to be free from unwarranted governmental intrusion into matters so fundamentally affecting a person as the decision whether to bear or beget a child.’

“While abortion remains protected by constitutional precedent, challenges to *Roe v. Wade*’s protection of abortion have generated mandatory waiting periods, biased counseling

requirements, restrictions of young women's access, and costly and unnecessary regulations that make it increasingly difficult for women to obtain safe abortion care.

"Abortion generates a passionate reaction in many Americans. While I understand that some may personally be opposed to abortion, I lament the vitriol that surrounds abortion within our cultural discourse. The most recent and tragic example of the corrosive effects of hyperbolic anti-choice rhetoric was the 2009 murder of Dr. George Tiller, an abortion provider in Wichita, Kansas, who was gunned-down while he was at church.

"As we reflect on the 38<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, a culture of misinformation, violence, and intimidation pervades the national discussion on abortion and hinders women from receiving appropriate care and counseling. I remain committed to supporting a woman's constitutional right to make decisions about her own body and echo the professional opinion of Dr. Nada Stotland, a psychiatrist and professor of obstetrics and gynecology who testified before the Senate: '[women should be able to make decisions] on the basis of their own values, beliefs, and circumstances, free from pressure or coercion, and to have those decisions, whether to terminate or continue a pregnancy, supported by their families, friends, and society in general.'"

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